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COMIXOPH

Rabbits From Hell

LIFE IN HELL

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Diphthongs are funny. You've probably followed Matt Groening's Life in Hell for years now and figure he calls himself "GROAN-ing." Well, ha, it's "GRAIN-ing." Pronouncers please take note. Take further note that as of this issue Matt will be appearing every week in the pages of this here sheet. Life in Hell. His highly beloved, highly syndicated, highly all reet and exactly six-year-old strip.

The strip which has so far given the world Binky, star of his very own non-shrink T-shirt, a bulgy-eyed, alienated "rabbit of the '80s," male; Sheba, a less recurrent but no less alienated rabbit, female; Bongo, a thoroughly terrified rabbit youth (male, one-eared); Akbar and Jeff, look-alike quasi-humanoid shorties in fezzes, twin-dot "Picasso eyes" on one side of their noses; and the fabulous, incredible "eraser-and-pushpin animal" (unnamed). A fine batch of line-drawn recurrents. Not since the salad days of R. Crumb's Mr. Natural and Artsy Fartsy, for inst, or S. Clay Wilson's Checkered Demon, Captain Pissgums et al. has the world of comics and letters had so viable a cast of 2-D familiars.

Which is not to say that life in Hell stands pat, unchanged, business as usual. Making its one and only appearance in 1984, Binky's Weenie Barn (home of the Jumbo Pup, Dog 'n' Coffee and the Dog-Gone-It Omelet) had by '85 transmuted into Akbar & Jeff's Tofu Hut (featuring Tater Shakes, Yogurt-Up and the Beet Frothy), and who knows what alterations tomorrow may bring?

An L.A. resident since '77, Groening, 32, was born in Portland. While attending The Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington, he was bumped from a brewery tour for continually asking, "What does it cost to bottle one bottle of beer?" His first book, Love Is Hell, has just been reprinted by Pantheon, with its sequel, Work Is Hell, slated for re-issue in the fall.

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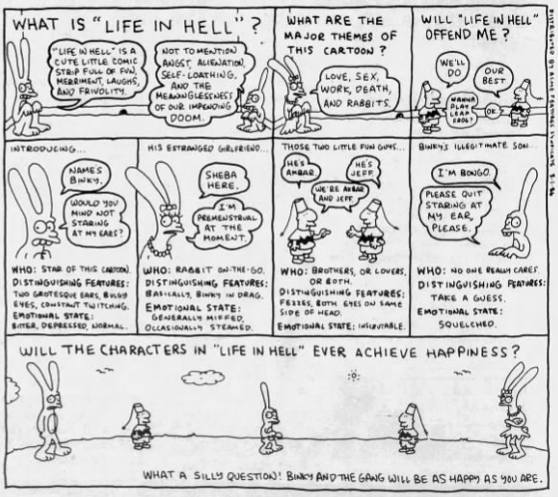
HELL FOR BEGINNERS

A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO THIS CARTOON FOR NEOPHYTES AND A REMEDIAL COURSE FOR THOSE (WHO HAVEN'T BEEN PAYING ATTENTION)



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